

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 remain pending in this application, with Claims 1 being the sole independent claim. Claims 1-8 have been amended herein to improve their form. The changes are not necessarily made for any reasons related to patentability.

The drawings were objected to for alleged discrepancies between reference numerals 642 and 645 in Figures 4 and 5. It is respectfully submitted, however, that there are no discrepancies between Figures 4 and 5. It should be noted that Figure 5 is similar to Figure 4, but Figure 5 shows drain pack 642 with drain pack case member 647 removed. That is, in Figure 5, waste ink absorber 645 is exposed. The horizontal section of the waste ink absorber 645 shown in Figure 5 is part of the drain pack and is shown in Figure 5 because the case member is removed. In Figures 3 and 4, different portions of the drain pack are being identified.

Thus, Figures 3, 4 and 5 are all consistent. If the Examiner requests further clarification, he is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney.

The specification was objected to for minor informalities. The specification has been amended in the manner suggested by the Examiner. Other minor changes to the specification have been made to improve its form. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the specification are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite. Without conceding the propriety of this rejection, Applicant has reworded the language questioned by the Examiner. In particular, the recitation of the flow passage has been clarified such that it “is formed as a sealed space except for portions connecting to the discharging portion of said recovery means and to said ink retaining means” and is “provided with an absorber while maintaining a gap between walls of the flow passage and the absorber and extending from the discharging portion to said ink-retaining means.” To read the flow passage on the figures, waste ink flow passage 641 is a sealed passage, but has one end connected to pump 640 and the other end connected to waste ink absorber 645 within drain pack 642. That is, the flow passage is a sealed passage with openings at both ends. As to the gap, a flow passage absorber 644 is provided within flow passage 641 and a difference in dimensions between the absorber 644 and the interior walls of the flow passage 641 defines a gap. That gap extends in flow passage 641 from the discharging portion to the ink-retaining means. Of course, the claims are not intended to be limited in the scope to this preferred embodiment.

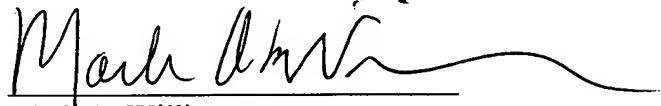
Thus, the recitations of Claim 1 are believed to be clear and definite. Regarding any questions the Examiner may still have, he is again urged to contact Applicant’s undersigned attorney. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 112, second paragraph, rejection are requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1. Dependent Claims 2-8 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent Claim 1. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objections and rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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